

Amendments to the Claims

Please amend the claims according to the following listing of the claims.

1 – 25. (Canceled)

26. (Currently Amended) A method of forming a component, comprising:

heating an aluminum coated steel blank to an austenization temperature, ~~causing an~~  
~~increase in layer thickness;~~

rapidly cooling said blank;

allowing said heat treated blank to stand at room temperature for an interval of time;

heating said cooled, heat treated blank a second time to an austenization temperature  
greater than or equal to 850°C; and

forming said blank while heated to produce said component.

27. (Previously Presented) A method according to claim 26 wherein the interval of the initial heating of said blank is in the range of 9 to 30 minutes.

28. (Previously Presented) A method according to claim 26 wherein the conditions of the second heat treatment are controlled so as not to increase the layer thickness of the blank.

29. (Previously Presented) A method according to claim 26 wherein the interval of the subsequent heating of said blank is in the range of 10 seconds to 2 ½ minutes.

30. (Previously Presented) A method according to claim 26 including varying the heat applied to different portions of the surface of the blank.

31. (Previously Presented) A method according to claim 26 including reinforcing said blank between said separate heat treatments.

32. (Previously Presented) A method according to claim 26 including maintaining said blank in a heated condition while forming.

33. (New) A method according to claim 26, wherein the first heating step causes an increase in layer thickness of the aluminum coating.